

TOWN OF MERRILLVILLE
TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
February 9, 2016

CALL TO ORDER: 6:32 p.m.

INVOCATION: Father John Plavcan – St. Joan of Arc Church

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

ROLL CALL: Mrs. Miano and Mrs. Uzelac were absent. All other members were present.

PETITIONS, COMMUNICATIONS, ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS AND REMONSTRATIONS:

President Hardway read a letter from State Representative Julie Olthoff of District 19 regarding passing House Bill 1110.

CONSENT AGENDA:

Approval of the Accounts Payable Register Voucher dated February 9, 2016. Approval of Town Council Meeting Minutes of January 26, 2016. Mr. Pettit made a motion to approve and was seconded by Mrs. Barron. There was no discussion. The motion was approved by a unanimous voice vote.

STANDING COMMITTEES:

BUDGET & FINANCE: Mr. Pettit had no report.

PUBLIC WORKS: Mr. Spann had no report.

COUNCIL AFFAIRS: Mrs. Uzelac was absent, no report.

PERSONNEL POLICY & EMPLOYEE BENEFITS:

Mrs. Barron is interested in setting up a meeting with every department to discuss feedback as to what each department may be lacking, and the needs/wants for their area.

PUBLIC SAFETY:

Mrs. Uzelac was absent. President Hardaway discussed the Police Department Annual Report. He was impressed with the 2015 crime statistics. He went on to say that the Police Department takes a proactive approach to address crime, and congratulated the department for a great job. Mr. Bushemi also provided positive feedback in regards to the report. He stated that Merrillville Police officers are well trained and perform their duties for the citizens.

President Hardaway read a letter from Indiana FOP labor council regarding an expiring collective bargaining agreement. President Hardaway asked Mr. Bushemi to handle the request with the assistance of the Public Safety Committee.

PARKS & RECREATION:

Ms. LaMarca stated the Parks Department submitted their 2015 Annual Report. Any questions can be directed to Jan Orlich.

ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS:

Mrs. Barron mentioned that Lake County Solid Waste has reduced the number of drop off sites. Munster, Hobart, and Crown Point are now the available drop off locations. Lake County Solid Waste has also started a new program related to latex paint disposal. Mr. Lake stated that Stormwater is sponsoring a Rain Barrel decorating contest for various Merrillville Schools. There will be a presentation of the barrels on April 16th at the Northwest Indiana Earth Day celebration, Porter County Expo Center. He went on to provide additional Stormwater updates.

ELECTIONS & PUBLIC RELATIONS:

Ms. LaMarca mentioned that AARP is providing free tax preparation for senior citizens. Contact the Clerk-Treasurers office at 769-3501 to schedule an appointment. The 4th of July parade will be held on July 4th at 12 p.m. Mr. Pettit said there was a change in date for the State of the Region Address. The event is rescheduled for March 2, 2016 at the Radisson Hotel, 6 p.m.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT: Mr. Pettit had no report.

UTILITY LIAISON:

Mrs. Barron encouraged everyone to continue to save plastic caps. She stated the Cap Program is still going on and has not ended.

ABANDONED PROPERTIES:

President Hardaway said members of the Abandoned Blighted Properties Committee went to South Bend and sat in on their abandoned buildings & blight hearings. With the information they gained from the hearings, they intend on rolling out some different programs on how to enhance our current blight program.

GENERAL ORDERS:

FIRST READING ORDINANCES:

Ord. 16-03: An Ordinance of the Town of Merrillville, Lake County, Indiana, appropriating additional monies within the 2015 GO bond for the year 2016 not included in the current budget. Mr. Pettit made a motion to approve the ordinance and was seconded by Mrs. Barron. There was no discussion. The motion carried by a 5-0 roll call vote.

Ord. 16-04: An Ordinance of the Town of Merrillville, Lake County, Indiana, appropriating additional monies within the 2015 RDC bond for the year 2016 not included in the current budget. Mr. Pettit made a motion to approve the ordinance and was seconded by Mrs. Barron. There was no discussion. The motion carried by a 5-0 roll call vote.

Ord. 16-05: An Ordinance of the Town of Merrillville, Lake County, Indiana, appropriating additional monies within the Firefighters equipment fund for the year 2016 not included in the current budget. Mrs. Barron made a motion to approve the ordinance and was seconded by Mr. Pettit. There was no discussion. The motion carried by a 5-0 roll call vote.

SECOND READING ORDINANCES:

Ord. 16-02: An Ordinance of the Town of Merrillville, Lake County, Indiana, amending Ordinance 15-33 of the Parks non-reverting program fees for the year 2016. Mr. Pettit made a motion to approve the ordinance and was seconded by Mr. Spann. There was no discussion or public comment. The motion carried by a 5-0 roll call vote.

RESOLUTIONS:

Res. 16-07: A Resolution of the Town of Merrillville, Lake County, Indiana transferring monies of the 2016 budget within certain categories. Mr. Pettit made a motion to approve the resolution and was seconded by Mrs. Barron. There was no discussion. The motion was approved by a unanimous voice vote.

Res. 16-08: A Resolution of the Town of Merrillville Town Council supporting enactment of legislation to reform how big-box stores are assessed. Mrs. Barron made a motion to approve the resolution and was seconded by Ms. LaMarca. Discussion followed. The motion was approved by a unanimous voice vote.

BZA ACTIONS:

Petitioner: Justin Furr
Owner: Meijer's
Request: Special exception approval
Purpose: For a car wash facility
Location: 605 West 81st Avenue
Zoning: C-3, Highway Commercial
Case #: Z35E10-1015
Conditions: For this petitioner only at this location only for this use only.

Mr. Pettit made a motion to approve with the additional condition that the cut on US 30 would remain open. Discussion followed among Council Members as to whether additional conditions should be implemented. The motion dies due to lack of a second motion.

Mrs. Barron made a motion to approve and was seconded by Ms. LaMarca. There was no further discussion. The motion carried by a vote of 3 yes and 2 abstentions.

Petitioner: Karma Cigars
Owner: Karma Cigars
Request: Special exception approval
Purpose: For a restaurant in a cigar shop
(Phase 2 of the Cigar shop interior remodel)
Location: 850 West 81st Avenue
Zoning: C-3, Highway Commercial
Case #: Z4E1-0116
Conditions: For this petitioner only at this location only for this use only.

Mrs. Barron made a motion to approve and was seconded by Ms. LaMarca. There was no discussion. The motion carried by a 5-0 roll call vote.

Petitioner: Century Plaza
Owner: Century Plaza
Request: Use variance approval
Purpose: Previously approved for two (2) digital message center signs on existing freestanding signs in 2006 and would like to locate one (1) of the digital message center signs on new freestanding sign that will be north of Staples. This request will not exceed the two (2) digital units previously approved.
Location: 8275 Broadway
Zoning: PUD/C-3, Planned unit development/highway
Case #: Z21v-0606 & Z22uV-0606
Conditions: For this petitioner only at this location only for this use only.

Mrs. Barron made a motion to approve and seconded by Mr. Spann. There was no discussion. The motion was approved by a unanimous voice vote.

Petitioner: Yosef Alahmad/American Auto Sales
Owner: ICD
Request: Revision of special exception approval condition for number of used vehicles to be located on the lot
Purpose: Merrillville Auto Sales would like to have a total number of twenty (20) used vehicles for sale displayed on the lot including inside and outside display. Previously approved on 7-22-15 by the BZA and on 8-25-15 by the Town Council for ten (10) used vehicles for sale on the lot including inside and outside display.
Location: 5924 Broadway
Zoning: C-2, Community Commercial
Case #: Z29E8-0715
Conditions: Combination of outside and inside display not to exceed twenty (20) used vehicles for sale with the condition that all cars that can be purchased there are clearly marked they are for sale so there is no confusion regarding what is the business's current inventory. Merrillville Auto Sales also isn't permitted to display its vehicles up for sale on lots at adjacent businesses.

A discussion took place regarding the petitioner's request. Town councilmen expressed concern about the number of used vehicles displayed on the lot. Mrs. Barron made a motion to approve with the conditions and was seconded by Ms. LaMarca. There was no further discussion. The motion carried by a 5-0 roll call vote.

OLD BUSINESS:
None

NEW BUSINESS:
None

PUBLIC COMMENT:
All public comment is recorded on an audio file and kept on file in the Clerk-Treasurer's Office at Town Hall.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Abandoned Blighted Properties Committee meeting, February 10, 2016 at 11:00 a.m.

Town Hall Offices Closed (except for Emergency Services)
February 15, 2016 in observance of President's Day.

Town Council workshop, February 17, 2016 at 6:00 p.m.

Town Council meeting, February 23, 2016 at 6:30 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT: A motion to adjourn was made by Mrs. Barron and seconded by Ms. LaMarca.

Richard Hardaway, President

Eugene Guernsey, Clerk-Treasurer